

St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Parish House
904 E. Knapp Street
Milwaukee
Milwaukee County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-271

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. WIS-271

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND PARISH HOUSE

Location: 904 East Knapp Street (northeast corner East Knapp and North Marshall Streets) Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Present Owner and Occupant: St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Statement of Significance: The second church built for Milwaukee's pioneer Episcopal congregation (organized in 1838), St. Paul's is the city's outstanding Richardsonian Romanesque church and is further distinguished by a splendid collection of stained-glass windows.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The edifice was built for and has remained the property of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.
2. Date of erection: 1882-90. Early in 1882 the building committee of St. Paul's vestry invited five prominent architectural firms to submit designs for the new church to be built at Knapp and Marshall streets. At a meeting of the vestry on May 13 the competition was resolved in favor of Milwaukee's E. T. Mix and Co., and the contract with Mix was approved on June 24. Excavations for the foundation commenced in the autumn of 1882. Ceremonies on June 19, 1884, marked the laying of the cornerstone, and on October 12, 1884, the first services were held in the still-unfinished church. Construction of the chapel was completed in 1884-85, of the southwest tower in 1888-89, and of the two-story parish house adjoining St. Paul's on the northeast in 1890. Consecration services, signalling completion of the fabric and payment of all debts, were held on November 11, 1891. The cost of the church, including lots and furnishings, had come to \$229,613.22. During the period of major construction various minor alterations and repairs had been carried out--among them, pointing in 1886, repairs to the roof and addition of a wooden partition with double door in the southeast tower vestibule in 1887, raising the chancel floor in 1888-89, construction of a doorway into

the chapel basement (north end, west elevation) and stone carving on the Marshall Street (west) elevation-- both in 1890.

3. Architect: As noted, the firm was E. T. Mix and Co. of Milwaukee. Both Edward Townsend Mix and his partner W. A. Holbrook (1849-1910) were involved in the work on St. Paul's. Mix (1831-1890) was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut and was apprenticed for six years to Richard Upjohn, a New York architect who was a leading proponent of Gothic Revival architecture. He came to Milwaukee in 1856 after a period of practice in Chicago in association with William W. Boyington, architect of Chicago's famous Water Tower. During the course of his practice in Milwaukee, Mix produced a wide variety of buildings, ranging from flamboyant Victorian designs to meticulously correct Gothic Revival forms. He was particularly noted for his fine ecclesiastical architecture. His Milwaukee churches include All Saints Episcopal Church (WIS-265), Immanuel Presbyterian Church (WIS-263). An example of his domestic architecture is the Jason Downer house (WIS-260).
4. Builders and suppliers: Although accounts of expenditures for the structure and its furnishings from 1882 to 1891 are exceptionally detailed (They state, to cite several examples, that the cost of roofing and slating was \$3,715.93; of carpets and cushions, \$2,885.88; electric lighting \$684.68; carpentry, \$21,135.15.), records identifying the firms and craftsmen to whom these sums were paid between 1882 and 1888 are scanty. It is documented, however, that Hibbard and Vance freighted the sandstone from Bass Island and that Cook and Hyde and the John C. Jones firm were responsible for stone-cutting and stone-setting, respectively. The organ, in place by October, 1884, was built by Hook and Hastings of Boston; and the apse mural, composed of three stylized angels, was the work of a Mr. Crossman of Chicago. A number of stained-glass windows complete or in progress by 1884 were executed by Louis Comfort of Tiffany's firm, others by McCully and Miles of Chicago, and a single window by Heaton, Butler, and Bayne of London.

From 1888-1891 came fuller records of the firms and individuals then at work on St. Paul's. A copy of the contract for the southwest tower survives, and this, together with an article in St. Paul's Church Parish

Record for June 1888, reveals that Cook and Hyde and John G. Jones were again handling the stone work; that the Koll Manufacturing Co. was responsible for woodwork; the Ormsby Co., tiling; William Harper and Co., painting; Thomas Mason, carpentry; a Mr. Ross, brickwork; and R. L. Jones, tin work. The wrought iron gate (since removed) and hinges for the tower door were supplied by the Hacla Iron Works of New York and the lantern in the tower vestibule by Tiffany's. F. A. Purdy had the contract to carve the four stone angels ornamenting the tower and did so under the direction not only of E. T. Mix and Co., but also, according to the "Rector's Letter" published in the 1890 Annual Reports, of a Mr. Loehner of New York. There are, further, records stating that Henry Buestrin's firm was paid for raising the chancel floor (possibly to accommodate the vested choir established in 1888), that the marble and mosaic reredos of 1890-91 (now dismantled) was the work of the Compagnia di Venezia-Murano of Venice, and that several memorial windows purchased from Tiffany's were added during the late 1880s and early 1890s.

5. Alterations and additions:

- a. 1891-1937: Minor alterations and repairs; addition of stained-glass windows; purchase of two residences on North Marshall Street.
- b. 1938: At the time of the congregation's centennial the sum of \$57,000 was sought to renovate and redecorate the church, chapel, parish house, and out-buildings (the two former houses service as church offices and Sunday school rooms) and to install a new heating plant. In 1938 the Munn Memorial windows, designed and executed by Charles J. Connick of Boston, were installed in the chapel.
- c. 1950-53: On December 19-20, 1950, fire struck the north end of St. Paul's, leaving the chapel and much of the parish house with little more than exterior walls intact (the extreme eastern section of the parish house suffered less severe damage), destroying the sacristy, and seriously damaging the chancel and its furnishings. Rebuilding began in 1951 and was completed the following year, when St. Paul's officially reopened on January 25, 1953. Work carried out in the \$500,000 project included the following:

- 1) Parish house: It has been enlarged to both north and south and the facade remodelled. It was re-planned and rebuilt on the interior, and the Munn Memorial windows from chapel were reset in the south stairhall.
- 2) Chapel (adjoining church to north): It was rebuilt on the interior and converted from chapel to "great hall". A new wooden staircase was added in the northwest tower; several windows in the west elevation were bricked-up; and two chimneys on the north were removed. The arches above the windows and door in the north elevation were bricked-up.
- 3) Interior of the church proper:
 - a) Sacristy rebuilt.
 - b) Chancel redesigned, rebuilt, refurnished; given semicircular apse faced with pink Mansota stone and Carolina greenstone and crowned by a semi-dome; new clerestory windows; new furnishings, including lectern (incorporating the brass eagle from the original lectern), marble altar, altar candlesticks, floor standards, and silver-plated suspended cross; pulpit of 1882-84 modified; organ rebuilt.
 - c) Nave arcades extended north across transepts to chancel; columns redesigned and given new stone veneer, new capitals and bases; arches lowered; new string moldings installed below clerestory windows.
 - d) East transept converted into "morning chapel;" new altar.
 - e) West transept converted into baptistery.
 - f) South wall of nave given a shallow gallery (to accommodate antiphonal organ); mosaic panels from dismantled reredos were installed in niches on this wall.
 - g) Southwest tower received new concrete stairs (interior stairway) and new door (original hardware retained).

- 4) Exterior of the church: Patching and replacement of damaged stone walls, buttresses, and window frames; repairs to roof and gutters.

Architects for this considerable undertaking were Eschweiler and Eschweiler of Milwaukee. The general contractor was the Dahlman Construction Co.,; and other firms involved included: La Marche Bros., Chicago, organ; Ossit Church Furniture Co., Janesville, Wis.; George Ludwig Bronze Co.; Volbrecht Cut Stone Co., and George L. Payne Studios, Patterson, N. J., stained glass in chancel clerestory. The Italian marble altar, hanging cross, altar candlesticks, and floor standards were all designed and made in England.

Later in 1953 the Good Shepherd window in the children's chapel (parish house, lower level), designed and executed by J. Wippell and Co., Ltd., of Exeter, England, was installed.

- d. 1960-61: A slate roof was replaced by the present shingled roof; and the entire exterior was tuck-pointed.
- e. Unspecified date: Battlements of the southwest tower were cut back; a trumpet and a portion of one arm of an angel on the northwest corner of this tower were removed.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Architect Edward Townsend Mix was chosen to design St. Paul's in an invitational competition conducted by the vestry's building committee. A gifted group, his competitors included Ware and Van Brunt of Boston, Howland Russel of Milwaukee, Richard M. Upjohn and Henry G. Harrison, both of New York City. The vestrymen were not entirely satisfied with any of the proposals submitted, however, and when a majority finally agreed to retain Mix, it was only on the condition that his plans be revised to meet their specifications.

Through the years St. Paul's has received innumerable gifts of fine furnishings and art objects. A particular treasure, acquired in 1957, is an early sixteenth century Flemish tapestry, representing the betrothal of Mary of Burgundy, which hangs in the east transept (morning chapel).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: St. Paul's preserves a fine collection of photographs ranging from a view of the church under construction and photos of the exterior (including the parish house) and interiors before the 1950 fire to photos taken during and after this blaze and views of the rebuilt interiors and their furnishings. Several of these photos are displayed in the front (south) stairhall of the parish house, while others are conserved in church albums and files. In addition, three important early drawings survive in the original or in contemporary reproductions. Most significant is the watercolor sketch, belonging to the church, signed by Mix and believed to be the one he submitted in the competition of 1882. This sketch or another by Mix inspired the drawing published in the Evening Wisconsin in 1884 (on September 27 and on an undetermined date earlier that year). Both afford interesting contrasts with the church as built and corroborate the evidence of the "Vestry Minutes" that Mix was obliged to alter his original design. A detail drawing of the southwest tower (upper portion), based on the architect's sketches, appeared in the St. Paul's Church Parish Record for May, 1889. Finally, the church has on file a complete set of prints of the Eschweiler and Eschweiler drawings for the alterations and additions of 1951-52.
2. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

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Interviews with Mrs. E. V. Hanley, St. Paul's Church, January 22, 1965 and August 1, 2, 6, and 7, 1968.

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Records, General Office, Inspector of Buildings, 1010
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: St. Paul's Church is Richardsonian Romanesque in style. The exterior was based on a published project by Richardson, an unexecuted design for Trinity Church, Buffalo, which appeared in the Architectural Sketch Book for July 1873. At least one detail of the exterior as originally planned was drawn from yet another Richardson church: the angel frieze on the southwest tower closely resembles that on the tower of the Brattle Square Church in Boston. When completed, St. Paul's tower incorporated only the four corner angels from this design. The extent to which the interior was also dependent upon Richardson has not yet been ascertained, although it should be noted that the original color scheme, dominated by deep reds and golds, with accents of rich blue and green, was similar to that of Richardson's Trinity Church in Boston. The original interior was unlike the present one in several respects: The transepts were open to the nave; the chancel had a different form and was more elaborately furnished and ornamented. The nave arcade consisted of polished red granite columns of varying diameters with yellow sandstone bases and foliate capitals (a scheme consistent with the granite Romanesque-derived colonettes flanking the entries and the columns ornamenting the west porch of the exterior); the walls and furnishings presented a variety of colors, with red and golden tones predominating and echoing the exterior color scheme.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The depth (north-south) of church and great hall (formerly chapel) is 177 feet, with the one-story parish house wing of 1951-52 on the northeast

extending an additional 21 feet to the north. Width of the church at the nave is 67 feet, at the transepts 96 feet; and the total width on Knapp street of church and parish house is 128 feet. The nave ceiling is reportedly 67 feet high at the ridge.

2. Foundations: Limestone
3. Wall construction:
 - a. Church and great hall: Deep red rock-faced Bass Island (Lake Superior) sandstone was used, with the mullions and tracery of windows being yellow sandstone. The colonettes flanking the three main entrances and columns on the west porch were polished granite.
 - b. Parish house: Chiefly, cream-colored brick was used with the south facade being faced with sand-colored brick and trimmed with matching stone.
4. Chimneys: One, red sandstone; two chimneys on the north wall were removed in 1951-52.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors:
 - 1) Church and great hall:
 - a) South elevation: There are two portals, one in the southeast tower and one in the center of the facade. Both are step-splayed, round arches, the former having two granite colonettes on each side of the door, the latter having three. Each has a wooden tympana and diagonally panelled double doors. These doors are original and retain their original wrought-iron hinges and pulls (lion heads with rings).
 - b) West elevation: Two doorways into the basement level (one beneath the first bay of the nave, the other, near the north end of the elevation, into the great hall basement); three doors into the main level (one in the southwest tower, the others opening off the recessed porch between west transept and great

hall). The southwest tower door is, like those of the facade, a step-splayed, round arch with granite colonettes in the jambs. The wooden double door itself and diamond-paned leaded-glass tympanum both date from 1951-52; the hardware is original and similar to that of the south doors. Both porch doors are rectangular. That leading into the great hall on the north is a double door with leaded-glass, rectangular transom; that opening into the west transept (now baptistery) is a single door, the stilted arch above it is filled with ruby red stained glass.

- c) North elevation: There is a door into the main level, great hall with a stilted arch bricked in 1951-52.

- 2) Parish house: The doors in the south and north elevations both date from 1951-52.

b. Windows:

- 1) Church:

- a) South elevation: Two round-arched windows are set on each side of the center entry. A wheel window is set in the south wall of the nave.
- b) Southeast tower: There is one round-arched window on the south and west faces of the tower at the second level. A rectangular window, capped by a lintel to create the effect of a trefoil, is located on each of the east, south, and west faces of the third level. At the top level, on these same faces, are paired rectangular windows, each separated by a colonette.
- c) Southwest tower: There is a round window in the south wall, main level, on all four sides of the second level are two round arched windows and a roundel, set into a larger blind arch. A small rectangular window is located on each of the four tower faces at the third level. At the top level, all sides of the tower are pierced by triple, unglazed openings, surmounted by a central roundel and flanked by

four smaller ones. Seven small rectangular windows light the stairwell in the south-west corner.

d) Nave and aisles: On aisle level, two round arched windows are in each of the three bays. There are three rectangular windows in each bay of the clerestory.

e) Transepts: One round-arched window is in the south wall of both transepts; in the west wall, west transept and east wall, east transept, is a triple window surmounted by two roundels and a larger wheel window. The entire composition is enclosed within a round arch.

f) Basement level: Rectangular windows

2) Great hall: All remaining windows are rectangular.

3) Parish house: All rectangular windows.

6. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

1) Church: Steeply pitched gable roof over nave; intersected by gables of transepts; the roof is covered with asbestos shingles.

2) Great hall: Gabled roof; slate.

3) Parish house: Flat roof.

b. Framing: The nave roof is timber-framed.

C. Description of the Interiors:

1. Floor plans:

a. Church proper (main level): Cruciform plan. Portals in the towers and center of the facade (south elevation) open into the vestibules (tower vestibules are separated from the main narthex by wood and glass partitions). Three doorways in the main vestibule open into the nave, which is flanked by

single aisles at east and west. East and west transepts are now occupied by the morning chapel and baptistery, respectively, and are separated from the nave, as they were not originally, by the 1951-52 extension of the nave arcade to the semi-circular chancel.

- b. Directly north of the church is the two-level great hall (originally the chapel), its main level now comprising, essentially, one large space with a small vestibule and stair tower on the west.
- c. North and east of the church and adjoining both church and great hall is the parish house, originally a two-story structure with basement, which was enlarged in 1951-52 by a shallow two-story addition on the south and a single-story addition on the north. After the 1950 fire, this portion of the church ensemble was almost completely rebuilt on the interior. It now houses a variety of meeting rooms, church school rooms, parlor, library, church offices, choir room, children's chapel, and kitchen facilities.

2. Stairways:

- a. Church, southwest tower: There is a stairway connecting the vestibule and lower level; and a steep spiral staircase in the southwest corner which connects the vestibule and upper levels of the tower.
- b. Great hall: The principal stairway (rebuilt in 1951-52) is a wooden, spiral staircase in the northwest tower.
- c. Parish house: Two major staircases connect all levels of the parish house, one at the south end and one at the north end.

3. Flooring:

- a. Church, main level:
 - 1) Vestibule: Indian red, square tile with borders of Connecticut brownstone (all original).
 - 2) Nave, aisles, transepts: Original terrazzo with carpeting.

- 3) Chancel: Patterned floor of tile and slate, largely postdating 1950 fire.
- b. Great hall and parish house: The oak and maple floors date, in the main, from 1951-52.
4. Wall and ceiling finish:
 - a. Church, main level:
 - 1) Main and southeast tower vestibules: Oak wainscot; plaster walls above; wooden ceilings.
 - 2) Southwest tower vestibule: Brownstone wainscot; red brick above; wooden ceiling.
 - 3) Nave, aisles, transepts: Black birch wainscot finished red-brown; plaster above; aisles have panelled wooden ceilings; nave and transepts have superb open-timbered hammerbeam ceilings, stained deep red-brown. Almost all of this woodwork is original and was restored after the 1950 fire. The nave arcade of columns and arches was, as noted, altered after the fire. The columns have been completely redesigned and given new stone veneer, capitals, and bases; the arches were lowered; and a new string molding was set in place below the clerestory windows. All plaster walls of nave, aisles, and transepts are now painted pale gray.
 - 4) Chancel: Rebuilt after the 1950 fire. Below the stone-faced semi-dome, the apse is faced with a pattern of pink Mansota stone and Carolina greenstone.
 - b. Great hall: Created from the original chapel in 1951-52, the main level has plaster walls above a wood panel wainscot.
 - c. Parish house: Walls chiefly painted plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: The remaining original doors in the main church--those in the vestibule partitions and connecting vestibule and nave--are oak. The numerous new doors installed after the fire are either birch (these predominate) or oak.

6. Trim: Wooden trim in the church proper was either oak or black birch, originally; both were stained red-brown. Except in the chancel area, most of this original trim survives.
 7. Hardware: The original wrought-iron hardware (strap hinges and pulls) remains on the three chief entrances--southwest and southeast towers and south elevation.
 8. Windows: St. Paul's magnificent stained glass was celebrated even as it was taking shape in the mid-1880s; the ensemble is still without peer in a Milwaukee church. The Tiffany windows are the most treasured; they are characterized by subtle, melting colors and liquid, curving forms. Of the Tiffany collection, the best known (and largest) windows are the Bishop Kemper Memorial of 1884-85 in the east wall, east transept (morning chapel). Its composition is based on Gustave Dore's Christ Leaving the Praetorium. The wheel window of 1884 in the nave's south wall, depicts, within a halo of green, the young Timothy at the knees of his teacher Barnabas. Two other windows, Hawley Memorial in the south wall, east transept and the wheel window in the southwest tower vestibule, date from 1887. Both are abstract compositions of small, irregularly-surfaced, deep-toned, glowing fragments of glass. The clerestory windows of the nave also merit special mention for their fluid abstract designs and their color schemes--rainbows of brilliant hues.
 9. Lighting: Electric throughout.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: Standing on a corner site, St. Paul's faces south. The ensemble of church, great hall, and parish house is bounded on the south by East Knapp Street, on the west by North Marshall Street, on the north by a church-owned former residence and a parking lot, and on the east by an apartment building.
 2. Outbuildings: In 1922 the church purchased two houses--one frame, one brick--north of the chapel (now great hall) on North Marshall Street. From the 1920s to the early 1950s these housed offices and church school facilities. Then, in 1955 the frame cottage at 1328 North Marshall

Street was razed to provide parking space. The brick building, an Italianate design predating the church, is still standing and serves as St. Paul's Thrift Shop and custodial quarters.

3. Walks: Two, both concrete; one extends between the north wall of the great hall and the former residence at 1324 North Marshall Street to the great hall's rear door; the other extends from Knapp Street north to the main door of the parish house.

Prepared by Mary Ellen Wietczykowsk
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1969 Milwaukee Project which was sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee, Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman. The project was done under the direction of James C. Massey, then Chief of HABS, and the team members included architect John N. DeHaas, Jr. (Montana State University), Project Supervisor, Mary Ellen Wietczykowsk--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission), Project Historian, and student architects Larry Hermsen (Iowa State University), Roger Little (Kansas University), Thomas Sanford (Washington State University), and Donna Woodrum (Virginia Polytechnic Institute). The data was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn R. Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed and Philip Hamp. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack Boucher.